

Student Services

Leading adolescent and child psychologist Dr Michael Carr-Gregg has put together six webisodes to give parents practical tips to deal with bullying. Below is a transcript of his practical advice about 'What if your child is the bully? The webisode is available at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iSZBLOBrehU>

What if your child is the bully?

No parent wants their child to be a bully, so the good news is that there are things you can do to help change your child's bullying behaviour.

Just as being bullied at school can have a negative impact on a child's growth and development, so can being a bully themselves.

As children grow, they need to be able to find solutions to conflict other than bullying and develop the ability to negotiate and resolve conflict in an appropriate way.

There are several steps that you can take to stop your child bullying others.

1. Talk to your child, and get them to understand that other people are being hurt by their actions, and that it's very wrong to hurt other children's feelings in an attempt to feel better about themselves.
2. Try to understand why your child is behaving this way. Are they having issues or problems elsewhere?
3. Work with the school to develop a behaviour plan that outlines the consequences for your child's behaviour - both at school and at home. It should include how long this plan will be in place for and what would happen if the behaviour continued or escalated.
4. Discuss with your child the long-term impact of bullying behaviour, for example, that other people may not want to be around them and the negative impacts it can have on their learning.
5. Talk to your school about additional support for your child, including counsellors to help your child develop more positive behaviour.

Again, it's important to stay calm and remember that the objective here is to enable your child to resolve situations without bullying.

Take what the school says seriously and work together with staff to develop a solution.

Schools take bullying very seriously and the consequences can range from a warning, detention, suspensions, or exclusions for more serious incidents.

If an incident involves violence, internet, or mobile phone abuse, or demands for money, then the victim and their parents may make a complaint to the police.

You might find it helpful to ask for a copy of the school bullying policy, so that you can go through it with your child.

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If you feel that your child has been unjustly accused of bullying, calmly talk with the school about investigating the claims, and resolving the issue.

Nobody wants their child to be a bully.

Remember that the goal here is to improve your child's behaviour and provide them with the ability to resolve issues, without resorting to bullying.

Your child bullying others doesn't make you a bad parent, but you will need to take constructive steps with your school to stop the behaviour.